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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When unpacking your CSA share or market haul, you may suddenly find yourself wondering - How should I store these vegetables? Storing your fresh vegetables correctly will help prolong the shelf-life of your beautiful produce - making sure you still have crisp lettuce and crunchy carrots when the time comes for you to cook with them.

This guide outlines strategies that will help you get the most out of your VRDNT veg. We will also help you identify which crops you can expect to hold for a few weeks in the fridge, and which you should consume more quickly. In addition to storing your veggies properly, simply knowing what you should use first will help you avoid that dreaded wasted-veggie shame spiral. Last, we included some tried and true farmer pro-tips on dealing with your vegetables.

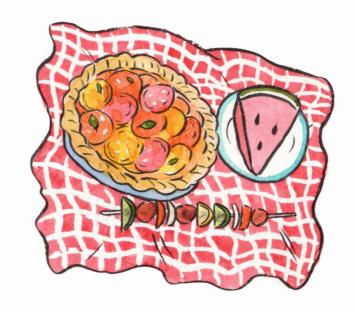
STORAGE LOGIC:

The moment a vegetable is plucked from the ground - detached from its water source and unearthed from the insulative soil - it begins to lose moisture, causing roots (like carrots) to go limp and greens (like chard) to wilt. The cell walls begin to collapse and the natural water in the vegetable begins to evaporate. Most of the storage tips in

this guide have the same goal: to retain the vegetable's moisture. When approaching your CSA share and trying to figure out how to store your veggies, it's helpful to keep this in mind.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

We organized this guide based on the way that you can expect to receive produce from VRDNT Farm. Some veggies come bunched together with a rubber band, and others are floating around in your bag, willy-nilly. This guide groups vegetables on how they get to you. We think this is the most intuitive way to approach veggie storage.



STORAGE TERMS

First things first.

Below is a brief description of the storage terms we use in this guide.

SHELF-LIFE:

The length of time you can expect your VRDNT veggies to last. Despite the name, most vegetables should actually be stored in your refrigerator's crisper drawer - not on a shelf.

From the moment we harvest your produce, we're thinking about it's shelf-life and have operating procedures in place that guide our "post-harvest handling procedures." Some of the things we do at the farm to increase shelf-life include removing "field heat" through the use of shade, water, and early-morning harvest schedules. With the one big exception of delivery day, there are little to no disruptions in the "cold chain" at the farm. We have several coolers at different temperatures that help us best store vegetables based on their specific characteristics. We could go on and on.

Once the veggies arrive to your kitchen, it's your turn to care for the edibles... which is why we've created this guide! We put a lot of care into the planting, growing, picking, and delivering of these vegetables, and are so grateful that you've chosen to eat them! We hope this guide helps you get the best out of your haul.

When you see the shelf-life of your veg dwindling, it's always good to have a plan of last resort. A big pot of soup, in my opinion, is the best savior.

If not too far gone, many vegetables can be revived from a limpish state. To

REFRESHING:

refresh bunched greens, treat them like the beautiful bouquet they are: trim the ends, and place in a glass of water, perhaps with a plastic bag gently covering the top (goodbye beautiful bouquet metaphor).

STORAGE TERMS CNT.

PLASTIC BAGS:

Many of the storage suggestions reference a plastic bag. The produce bags from the grocery store are great options to use. At home, we will also use very large ziplock bags. They're great because you can see through them, easily taking inventory of what needs to be cooked, and the bags can be washed and reused almost endlessly. Many of the commercially produced plastic vegetable bags (like the ones our loose carrots come in) are 'vented' - meaning there are tiny holes in the bag that allow for some moisture to escape. If storing your produce in a large ziplock, for example, it's good to emulate this venting "technology"... aka, just don't zip up the bag all the way, or fold over the top and close with a clip vs. the zipper seal. In the guide below, we'll often refer to a "mostly-sealed bag," and now you know what we mean.

FABRIC PRODUCE BAGS:

There are many options out there for fabric produce bags made from natural fibers like cotton or linen. Most of these bags are designed to get wet. Produce is then stored in the damp bag, in the crisper drawer. The bag's moisture will help keep the veggies perky when they begin to lose their own moisture. (Farms will often spray the floors of their cooler with water for a similar effect!)

STORAGE CONTAINER:

If you don't want to use plastic bags and don't have the fabric variety, you can also use a glass or plastic container with a tight-fighting lid.

CRISPER DRAWER:

Your refrigerator's crisper drawer is always the best spot for your produce to live. The drawer is designed to maintain humidity, and retain moisture. If it gets crowded in there, prioritize the space for more tender and fragile vegetables, like lettuce or greens, and move the roots to the shelf (in a bag) until you're able to make some more room.

VRDNT PRODUCE BAGS:

The bags VRDNT delivers our produce in are a great resource. In a pinch, you can just throw the entire bag in the fridge and all of the vegetables will fare better stored that way than lying naked on a fridge shelf. Don't ever leave your vegetables naked on a fridge shelf where they'll most certainly dry out.

STORAGE GUIDE



BUNCHED ROOTS (AND ROOT-LIKE)

carrots, radishes, turnips, beets, kohlrabi, fennel

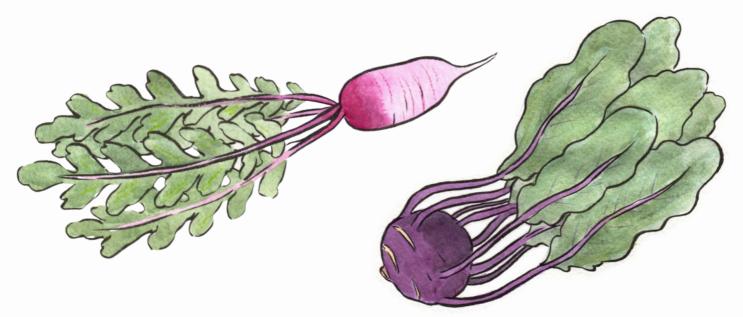
HOW TO STORF:

When we say "bunched root crops" we mean vegetables that are tethered with a twist tie or rubber band, and are one part leaf, one part root.

On the day you bring home your VRDNT veggies, it's worth setting aside, say, 30 seconds (?) to detach the greens from the root. If you learn anything from this guide, learn this! If left intact, these greens will continue to wick moisture out of the root, their usual source of water, leaving limp carrots, beets, or the like. Store the roots (now what we would call "bulk roots") and greens ("bunched greens") in separate, semi-sealed bags. The next page has more details on bulk root crop storage.

PROTIP:

Bunched root crops are the original farm BOGO! Two veggies for the price of one! Radish, kohlrabi, turnip, carrot: all the greens are edible! The greens-portion of any bunched root will have a shorter shelf-life than the actual root; if you're debating on what to cook, eat your greens first! And if you're stumped on what to make, blitz the greens with some nuts and olive oil for a pesto-like sauce.



carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, parsnips

HOW TO STORE:

If your root veggies have some dirt clinging to them, simply soak them in a bowl or basin of water, then gently scrub the dirt away. Store the roots separately from any greens, in a mostly-sealed bag, in the crisper drawer; it's okay if they have a tiny bit of water still clinging to them. If you're using a plastic bag and hope to store the roots for longer than a week or so, you can consider including a damp paper towel in the bag - this will help maintain the humidity/moisture level in the bag. Replenish the towel if the roots begin to soften. Root crops properly stored can last anywhere from 3 weeks to 3 months, depending on the root and your level of concern.

Alas, if your carrots or beets get buried at the bottom of your crisper drawer and they emerge like sad balloons, don't give up on them just yet! Try placing them in a cool bowl of water in the fridge for a few hours. You may be pleasantly surprised! (And if they don't perk up, use them for stock!)

PROTIP:

Our favorite way to welcome VRDNT roots into the kitchen is to batch-roast a big mess of 'em. When roasting roots, keep these three tips in mind: 1. Heat your oven to hotter than you're maybe accustomed to. We like to roast veggies at 425 degrees. 2. Chop your veggies in similar sizes so they cook at roughly the same rate. 3. Make sure your veggies are spread out on your roasting tray, using two trays if necessary. Veggies shouldn't be touching each other; they need room to breathe (and brown)! If your veggies touch, they'll steam instead of brown.



BUNCHED GREENS

kale, collards, chard, spinach, mustard, mizuna, tatsoi

HOW TO STORE:

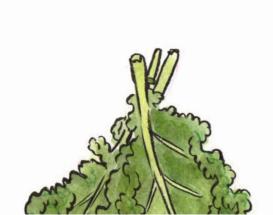
Bunched greens like to be stored in a slightly sealed bag, in the crisper drawer.

Some bunched greens are more fragile than others. Mizuna and spinach (which are sometimes bunched, sometimes bagged) are more tender than dinosaur kale. Rawrr. If the greens are a little damp, it's a good idea to wrap the bunch in a paper towel before putting them in the bag. This will help wick away moisture from the actual leaves, preventing future slimage. Once you eat your greens, use the paper towel to clean up a spill.

If a bunch of greens arrives looking sad, trim the ends and refresh them in a cool cup of water for a few hours before moving on to fridge storage. Really, you can refresh your greens at any point - the day you get them, or a few days later. There's never a wrong time to make something anew.

PROTIP:

The more tender the leaves feel, physically, the more quickly they will need to be used. For example, bunched spinach is softer than collards, and will need to be used sooner. If the leaf can easily be smooshed between your fingertips, its shelf-life is shorter.





BAGGED GREENS

salad mix, pea shoots, spinach, baby kale, arugula

HOW TO STORE:

These fragile babies are perhaps the most perishable crop in all of your CSA share, and are among those you should use first! (Salad! See miso salad dressing recipe on page 27.) When you get your bagged greens home, fold up a clean dishcloth or dry paper towel and slip it in the bag. This will help wick away excess moisture from the greens, keeping them crisp and perky. If you happen to spy a leaf or two that is looking damaged (slimy or mushy), get it outta there.

If you decide you want to wash your greens, it's best to wait until just before you're going to use them. For best results, use a salad spinner to make sure they're very dry... oil-based salad dressings don't like to cling to wet leaves. The greens from VRDNT usually arrive looking pretty spotless, and mostly, I can't be bothered to give them a second wash at home. To each their own.

If you empty your bag-o-greens with intentions to make a salad and they look a little limp, you can refresh them by filling up a basin/bowl of very cool water and letting the loose greens swim for a bit. Dry well, and salad often.

PROTIP:

If you don't have a salad spinner and want to wash your greens, you can gently roll them up in a tea towel or clean dish cloth like you're making cinnamon rolls. Once rolled, gently pat around, then unroll and let air dry. This more passive method takes longer than a salad spinner, so it's best to do this as soon as you decide on salad so you can let your leaves dry while you prepare the rest of your ingredients.





HEAD LETTUCE

romaine, red-leaf, iceberg, salanova, bib, butter

HOW TO STORE:

These lettuces, while usually heartier than those bagged by the individual leaf, should also be consumed sooner rather than later. **Store in a plastic bag, with a paper towel stuffed inside, in the crisper drawer.** Head lettuces, when stored correctly, can last for upwards of two weeks.

Wait to wash these lettuces just before you use them. To refresh, you can put the whole head in a bowl of cool water.

PROTIP:

If you're like us and consume A LOT of lettuce, save the plastic zipper bag your grocery store lettuce came in and reuse it for the (arguably superior) VRDNT variety.

YET ANOTHER PROTIP:

If your head lettuce is beginning to turn and suddenly a raw salad seems less appealing, make a grilled salad instead! Trust us... grilled romaine is the BEST!



TENDER HERBS

cilantro, parsley, dill, green onions, scallions, green garlic, all the basils, mint, sage



HOW TO STORE:

The very, very best way to store your herbs also happens to be quite impractical for most fridges: like a bouquet of flowers, put your herbs in a glass of water and cover the whole thing with a plastic bag. The second best way, which is still extremely effective, is simply to **store tender herbs in a mostly sealed plastic bag, in the crisper drawer.** If the herbs are slightly wet, either dry them with a tea towel or lightly wrap them in a dry paper towel before bagging.

Like bunched greens, you can refresh any sad-looking bunched herbs. Trim the bottom, and stick in water.

LONGTERM:

To freeze your herbs, combine with olive oil and make a sauce. Using a blender, food processor, or immersion blender, combine (at the minimum) olive oil and fresh herbs of any combination. Take this sauce in the direction of pesto by adding nuts and cheese, or in the direction of an Italian salsa verde by adding capers, garlic, and anchovy. South American chimichurri and Middle Eastern schug are other versions of a freezable, herby sauce. We like to freeze saucy herbs in flattened ziplock bags which allows us to easily break off a piece when we need a quick punch of flavor.

PROTIP:

If you don't have a plan for your herbs, you can dry them! Either hang to dry, or use your oven: spread out on a baking sheet, and turn your oven to the lowest temperature it will go. After the oven has preheated, pop your herbs in the oven, and then turn the oven off. Leave the herbs in the oven until they're mostly dry, around 15 minutes. Remove, cool, and store in a sealed mason jar. When using, 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs equals about 1 teaspoon of dried.

WOODY HERBS

thyme, oregano, rosemary



HOW TO STORE:

If you'd like to keep the leaves of these herbs tender, wrap them in a barely damp paper towel, and put them in an airtight container in the fridge.

Or, surrender to their natural tendency to dry up. At my house, bundles of woody herbs often get hung from a peg near our stove. Once they're dry, I usually just shake the whole dried bundle over the pot or snap off a sprig. It feels rather witchy, and I like it.

PROTIP:

Mix flaky salt, dried lemon zest, and a plethora of dried herbs together for a fun, zesty, finishing salt. This makes awesome diy-gifts, too!



BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER

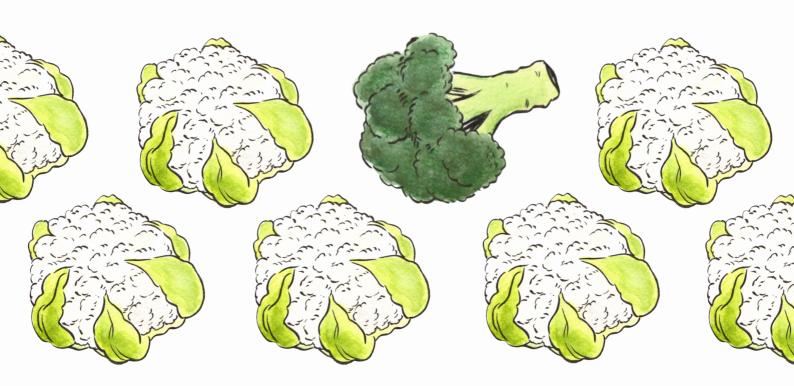
broccoli, cauliflower, romanesco, broccolini

HOW TO STORF:

Store in a bag, or sealed container, in the crisper drawer. Make sure there is a bit of space for circulation. Broccoli can last for 2 weeks, and cauliflower for up to 4 if kept cold. Do not remove the outer leaves from the broccoli or cauliflower until you're ready to cook. If you get long, beautiful pieces of broccolini, they refresh nicely, if needed; just trim the bottom.

PROTIP:

Don't toss your cauliflower or broccoli leaves or stems! Cook the leaves like any other hearty green, and the stems like a more juicy potato. When I'm roasting cauliflower, I often throw oil-coated leaves on the pan for second half of cooking so they can crisp up.



CABBAGE & CABBAGE-LIKE

nappa, savoy, red, green, bok choy, brussels sprouts

HOW TO STORF:

Store in a slightly sealed bag, in the crisper drawer.

A head of red or green cabbage, uncut, is pretty hearty and will be okay on a refrigerator shelf if the crisper drawer is full. Just make sure to avoid the very back corners of your fridge, which are often the coldest and may actually freeze the cabbage. For ultimate protection, put it in a plastic bag. In the crisper drawer, a cabbage can last for up to a month or two. Bok choy and brussels sprouts should also be stored in a bag and should be eaten sooner.

PROTIP:

Do not peel the outer layers from the cabbage until you're ready to use it. These thick, and sometimes gnarly leaves will help protect the whole head.



"WINTER" SQUASH

acorn, butternut, spaghetti

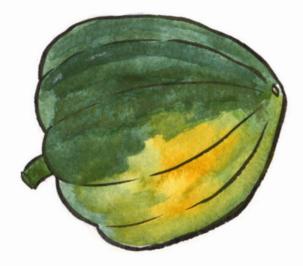


HOW TO STORF:

Don't waste your fridge space on these. Uncut winter squash should be stored at room temperature in a cool, dark place. Cold refrigerator temperatures will actually damage the squash and shorten the shelf-life. Depending on the squash and your specific kitchen conditions, winter squash can last for many months, though it begs the question of why you would actually want to wait that long.

PROTIP:

Spread your seasonal knowledge to all of your Southern friends, and let them know that here, these crops are actually harvested throughout the summer. Because of their hearty nature, they can easily store throughout the fall, and maybe into the winter if you're lucky.





POTATOES & SWEET POTATOES

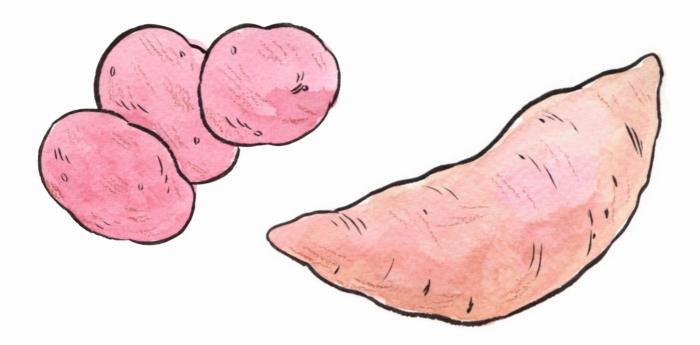


HOW TO STORE:

Store potatoes in a cool dark place, at room temperature. In lue of an actual root cellar, a pantry or cupboard will do. Do not refrigerate. Potatoes like a bit of airflow, so try to spread them in an even layer versus packed in a pile. Keep away from appliances, like a refrigerator, which can put off a lot of heat.

PROTIP:

Should you happen to have a wine fridge, store your potatoes and sweet potatoes in there; they're really happiest at 45-50 degrees, and can last for months when kept at this temperature. Should you feel like going pioneer, you can store your potatoes, and other root crops, in bins of damp sand. We mention this fact more so as an interesting tidbit than as an actual recommendation. But again, to each their own.



ONIONS

bulb onions, bulb garlic

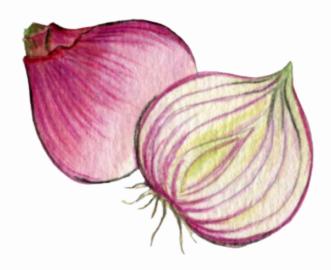


HOW TO STORE:

Like potatoes, store onions in a cool, dry, dark place, with plenty of airflow. The onions you receive can last for 1-5 months, depending on when in the season you got them. I know, it's quite the range. The upside? An onion will tell you when it's no longer worth slicing. A soft, smelly onion is compost fodder.

PROTIP:

If you grow onions, sweet potatoes, or potatoes at home, make sure you do some research on how to "cure" these vegetables before storing them. Lucky for you, Becky and the VRDNT team have already done this bit for you, giving your veggies a long, and happy, shelf-life.



TOMATOES



HOW TO STORE:

The best way to annoy a farmer is to store your tomatoes in the fridge. I kid... sort of. **Store tomatoes on the countertop.** They are happiest on a paper towel or piece of cardboard, stem side down, with some breathing room between each 'mater. Enjoy ASAP.

PROTIP:

Speed up the ripening of a blushing tomato by putting it in a sealed, brown paper bag. The ripening ethylene gas will have nowhere to escape, getting you from green to red, more quickly.



SUMMER CUCURBITS

squash, zucchini, patty pan, cucumbers

HOW TO STORF:

Store in a slightly sealed bag, in the crisper drawer.

Store in the crisper drawer, in a slightly sealed bag. These relatively fragile, thin-skinned specimens, squash especially, should be eaten within about a week's time for the best quality. Avoid the coldest corners of a fridge shelf, and wait to wash until you're ready to use.

PROTIP:

Handle your summer squash gently. Any small knick or bruise will invite in bacteria and speed up the ripening process.



MELONS

watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, korean melon

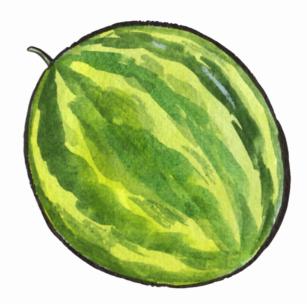
HOW TO STORF:

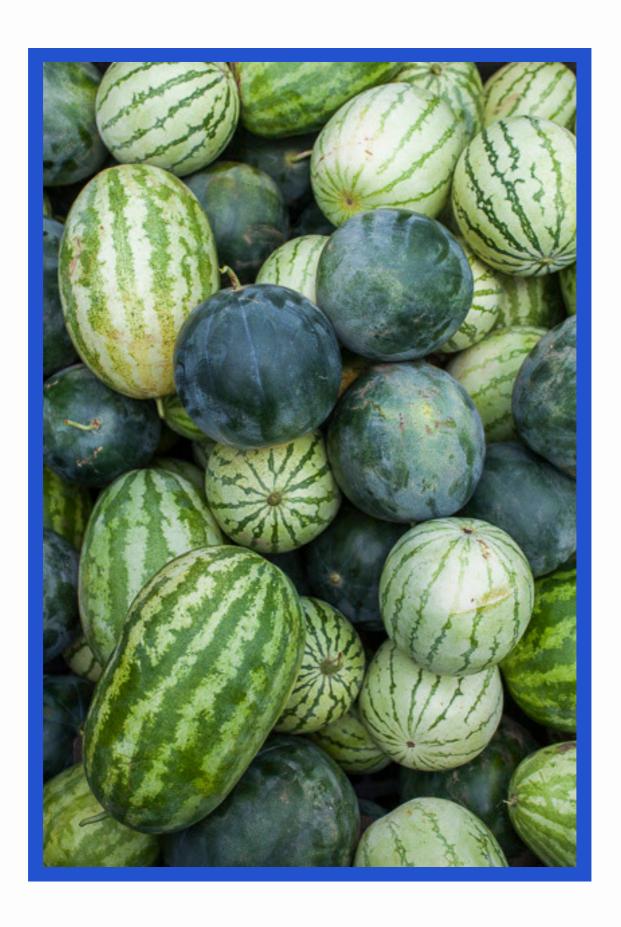
Store whole melons in the refrigerator where they will last for at least a week. Ideally, you can find room in your crisper drawer for the melon; the high humidity content will keep the melon juicy. No space in the crisper drawer? Just stick in a bag that you keep slightly open, on the shelf. Once cut, store melons in a container with a tight-fitting lid. If the prospect of fitting a whole melon in your crowded fridge is laughable, you can also store melons on the countertop in a cool, dark space, though we don't recommend doing this for longer than 2 or so days.

PROTIP:

Blend the flesh of any melon with a bit of lime juice for a refreshing agua fresca. (Option here to add some sugar or honey, too.) Leftover agua fresca? Make a frozen granita. Pour the leftover liquid into a large baking dish, and pop into the freezer. Every hour, remove the dish and scrape the top frozen layer with a fork. Keep doing this until the entire mixture is crunchy and slushy.







EGGPLANT

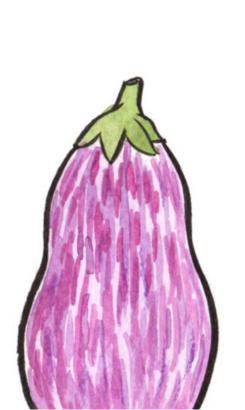


HOW TO STORE:

Eggplants like it cool, but not cold, and so there is great debate on whether it's best to store your eggplant in a cool dark spot in your kitchen (like in a cupboard), or in the crisper drawer of your fridge (in a bag). Either way, eggplant really should be eaten within about 4 days, leaving you little time to fret over the great eggplant unknown. For what it's worth, I usually store mine in the fridge, and am resigned to the possibility of a bit of cold-damage.

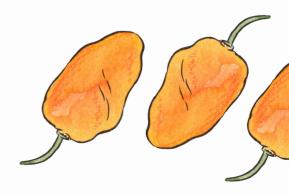
PROTIP:

Fruit like apples, peaches, melons, and bananas emit ethylene gas that will speed up the ripening of surrounding vegetables. To extend the shelf-life of your veg, including your eggplant, keep them away from these fruits.





PEPPERS - HOT & SWEET



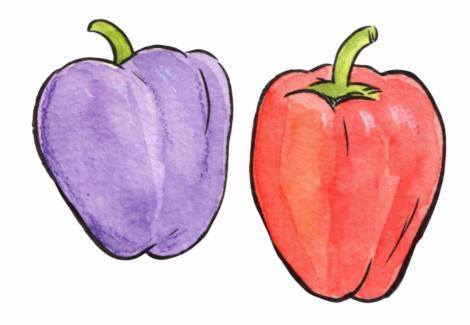
HOW TO STORE:

Store in a bag, in the crisper drawer of your fridge. Use within 1-2 weeks.

In the summer when the peppers are rolling in, it can be easy to become backlogged. Peppers are a perfect candidate for preservation. Make a hot sauce with spicy peppers, chop and freeze sweet ones, or pickle them all together.

PROTIP:

Instead of refrigerating, use a needle and embroidery thread to string together hot peppers for hanging and drying. Once dried, you can use them whole, or grind and store them, making your own VRDNT paprika or chipotle powder.





PODS

okra, green beans, long beans, snap peas

HOW TO STORF:

Store these pods in a bag, with a clean paper towel slipped inside. Keeping these vegetables dry, the okra especially, will help prolong their freshness. Okra should be used relatively quickly - ideally within 3-4 days - else it will begin to brown; it's a very sensitive little seed pod! Beans and snap peas should be used within about a week. No plan for your pods? Blanch and freeze 'em!

A FARMER'S THOUGHTS:

Appreciate the pod. Each of these crops is extremely labor-intensive to harvest. Each pod must be picked by hand, one by one. In the case of okra, you're also battling very itchy conditions, in the heat of a Texas summer. Add to that the fact that during their peak season, these plants must be harvested at least every other day - else their fruit will become too big, and inedible. Any farmer growing these vegetables is truly doing it as a labor of love.

FARMER'S FAVORITE MISO DRESSING

our go-to creamy dressing that tastes good on any VRDNT vegetable, raw or cooked.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons sesame oil
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar or lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons white miso paste
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 2 teaspoons fresh ginger, grated salt to taste (this will vary depending on the saltiness of your miso.)

DIRECTIONS

- Choose your own adventure: shake combined ingredients in a mason jar, or whisk in a bowl.
- Pour on raw, shredded cabbage, torn romaine lettuce, roasted carrots, or grated cucumbers. Truly, it's delicious on all vegetables.
- Keeps in a sealed jar, in the fridge, for about a week.















GLOSSARY











arugula, 9 basil, green, 12 basil, Holi (tulsi),12 basil, red,12 basil, Thai,12 beet, red, 5, 6 beet, gold, 5, 6 beet, chioggia, 5, 6 bok choy, 15 broccoli, 14 broccolini, 14 brussels sprouts, 15 cabbage, green, 15 cabbage, nappa, 15 cabbage, red, 15 cabbage, savoy, 15 cantaloupe, 22 carrot, 5, 6 cauliflower, 14 chard, rainbow, 8 cilantro, 12 collard, green, 8 collard, purple, 8 cucumber, 21 dill. 12 eggplant, 24 fennel, 5

garlic, green, 12 green beans, 26 green onions, 12 honeydew, 22 kale, baby, 9 kale, curly, 8 kale, dinosaur, 8 kale, red Russian, 8 kohlrabi, 5 Korean melon, 22 lettuce, bib, 11 lettuce, butter, 11 lettuce, iceberg, 11 lettuce, red-leaf, 11 lettuce, romaine, 11 lettuce, salanova, 11 long beans, 26 mint, 12 mizuna. 8 mustard green, 8 okra, 26 onion, bulb, 19 oregano, 13 parsley,12 pea shoots, 9 peppers, hot, 25 peppers, sweet, 25 potato, red, 18

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Thanks to the contributors of our sweet little storage guide: watercolor illustrations by Ashley Franklin, photos by Mackenzie Smith Kelly & Scott Gordon, words & design by Ada Broussard.

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